



CONSERVATION EDUCATION — Success Story
Green Connections

INTRODUCTION & PROJECT DESCRIPTION

— Green Connections is a dynamic educational partnership project for middle school teachers and their students from both New York City and the associated upstate Catskill/Delaware watersheds. A \$21,000 conservation education grant helped forge a partnership bringing together urban youths from New York City with rural youths from the Catskill Mountain region exploring how human use of the watershed affects all of the people using the water from that area.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS — Teachers from both New York City and the Catskill/Delaware watershed region attended the Watershed Forestry Institute and were given tools and information to teach students about the forests of the watershed region, and how those forests affect both water quality and quantity. Throughout the school year, participating classes were taught lessons relating to five themes

- forests and water quality
- drinking water supply systems
- working landscapes
- water conservation
- building partnerships

During the school year, partnering was fostered through letters and e-mails between classes.

In March 2001, partner schools took a 2-day field trip to New York City, where students learned firsthand about the City’s water supply system, its woodland parks, and the brackish and fresh water systems found there.

In May 2001, students from partner schools again met at the Frost Valley YMCA, located in the heart of the Catskills and New York City Watershed region, to map out their own versions of a watershed and debate the pros and cons of different land uses. They collected and observed aquatic life, took a forest ecology walk, and planted seedlings that had been monitored and nurtured in their classrooms for two months as a forest buffer along the West Branch of the Neversink River.



Students planting seedlings along the West Branch of the Neversink River in the Catskills.

KEY PARTNERS — USDA Forest Service; New York State Department of Environmental Conservation; New York City Watershed Ag Council; Catskill Forestry Association; New York City Department of Environmental Protection; MS 113, Fort Greene, Brooklyn; PS 11, Woodside, Queens; Ellenville Middle School; and South Kortwright School.

CONCLUSION — Nancy Wolf, who facilitated the program in cooperation with staff from the Catskill Forestry Association, stated: *“Following evaluation of the program, a guide will be developed to introduce this partnership approach to all schools in the New York City and upstate watershed.”*

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